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ABSTRACT

A statistical profile of Cuban Americans was provided by the 1980 Census and by a comprehensive telephone survey. Major findings include the following: (1) In most Cuban American households, Spanish is the language most spoken, but 85 percent of the Cuban American surveyed felt that residents of the United States should use English in their public dealings. (2) More than 85 percent of Cuban Americans are Catholic; almost 30 percent attend church at least once per week. (3) More than 70 percent of Cuban Americans say they are "very close" to their families. Average Cuban family sizes vary throughout the United States. The divorce rate among Cubans is higher than that of the United States population as a whole. (4) Almost 58 percent of all Cuban Americans said they were employed full time; only 8 percent said they were unemployed. (5) A majority of Cubans are Republicans, but those under 35 are more likely to be Democrats. (6) Nearly 60 percent of all Cuban Americans live in Florida; other states with significant Cuban population include New York (9.6%), California (7.6%), Illinois (2.4%) and Texas (1.8%). (7) Since the 1950s, about 1 million cubans have emigrated to the United States; the vast majority have settled in the Miami area. (8) The Cuban American median age is 37.5 years. (9) The Cuban American community has a smaller percentage of men than the United States average. (10) Cuban American children are much more likely to attend private schools than the population as a whole, and Cubans are close to the United States average in educational attainment. (11) Young Cuban Americans are less isolated from other racial and ethnic groups than their elders, and are less militant in their opposition to Fidel Castro. (12) The average income of Cuban American households is close to the average of the general population. (13) Approximately four out of five Cubans said they would remain in the United States if Castro fell. (KH)

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Cuban-Americans in the United States

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A statistical snapshot of Cuban-Americans in the United States was provided by the 1980 Census and by a comprehensive telephone survey conducted by The Miami Herald from October 28th to November 15th, 1983 (The Miami Herald, December 11, 18, 1983). In the survey, a total of 405 Cuban-Americans, 401 blacks, and 406 non-Latin white were interviewed. The sampling error for this survey was plus or minus 5%. Some of the statistics revealed were as follows:

- LANGUAGE: Spanish is still the language spoken in most Cuban-American households. More than 20% of all younger Cuban-Americans say they usually speak English at home, twice the percentage of older Cuban-Americans who say English was the language they spoke at home. The survey also showed that 85% of Cuban-Americans of both age groups felt that people who live in the U.S. should be fluent enough in English to use that language in their public dealings.

- RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE: More than 85% are Catholics; almost 30% say they attend church once a week or more.

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- FAMILY: More than 70% say they are "very close" to their families. Younger Cuban-Americans are less likely to say they were very close. Florida Cuban-American families are more likely to be larger than their American counterparts. The size of the average Cuban-American family in Florida is 3.4 persons, 11% larger than the average Florida family, which is 3.0 persons. In the New York-New Jersey area, the Cuban-American figure is 3.3, about the same size as average families in the two states. In the rest of the country, Cuban-American families have been highly susceptible to cultural pressures. The divorce rate among Cuban-American families is higher than that of the U.S. population as a whole.

- EMPLOYMENT: Almost 58% of all Cuban-Americans said they were employed full time. Only 8% said they were unemployed. The unemployment rate in the Cuban-American labor force is lower than the national unemployment rate. One of 10 working Cuban-Americans is an executive, approximately the same proportion as for the entire U.S.

- PART AFFILIATION: A majority of Cubans are Republicans. Cubans 35 years old or younger are more likely to be Democratic or unaffiliated with either party than their elders.

- GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Cuban-Americans in the U.S. live in Florida (58.5%), New Jersey (10.1%), New York (9.6%), California (7.6%), Illinois (2.4%), Texas (1.8%), and in other states (10%).

- NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS: Throughout the three distinct waves of immigration from Cuba, about 1 million people have left the island; 840,183 came to the United States; between 1959 and 1983, more than half a million Cubans settled in Miami. Of the 125,000 Cubans who came to the U.S. during the Mariel boatlift, officials estimate that 100,000 have remained in the Miami area.

- MEDIAN AGE: The Cuban community in the United States is older than the U.S. population in general. The median age in the U.S. population is 30.0 years. For Cuban-Americans, it is 37.5 years.

- PERCENTAGE OF MALES AND FEMALES: The results of Castro's emigration policy of barring military-age males from leaving and ecouraging the elderly to depart are reflectd in the 1980 census data, which indicate that the Cuban community has a smaller Percentage of men than the U.S. average. The U.S. figure is 94.5 men for every 100 women. Among Cuban-Americans, the figure is 90.8 men to 100 women. The difference is most acute in the 30-34 age group, in which there are only 79.4 men for every 100 women in the Cuban community.

- SCHOOLING: Cuban-Americans are much more likely to send their children to private schools than the U.S. population. About 27% attend private schools; for the U.S. population at large, the figure is 11%. This reflects both the Cuban cultural

tradition and a reaction to U.S. culture. In Cuba, everyone who could afford it, middle class and above, would not send their children to public schools. Additionally, to the Cuban-Americans there is an element of prestige and higher status in private schooling. Lastly, many Cuban-American parents who send their children to private schools do so because they feel that their children would be better protected there against drugs and crime, that there is more discipline and that, particularly in parochial schools, they receive religious training and their cultural heritage is respected. Cuban-Americans are close to the U.S. average in education. The median number of years of schooling is 12.3 for Cuban-Americans, and 12.5 for the U.S. population.

- GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES: The Miami Herald study showed that younger Cuban-Americans are less isolated from other racial and ethnic groups than their elders. They are also less militant in their opposition to Fidel Castro and more likely to favor cultural exchanges and diplomatic ties with Cuba.

- ECONOMIC DATA: The average Cuban-American household in Florida makes $18,857 a year, 101% of the state average. The average New York - New Jersey household income for Cuban-Americans is $18,523, 87% of the two-state average. Elsewhere, Cuban-Americans make $22,153, or 109% of the average household income. Cuban-Americans have far outstripped Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Blacks economically, yet Cubans as a national ethnic group still lag behind non-Latin whites in earnings. In

Florida, the younger Cuban-Americans now are outpacing non-Latin Whites of the same age. However, a higher proportion of Cuban-American families live in poverty; in the Cuban community, it is 11.7%. The Cuban-American percentage is higher than the non-Latin whites but lower than those of other minorities.

- FUTURE OUTLOOK: Approximately four out of five Cubans in both the above 35 and under 35 age groups said they would remain in the United States if Castro fell.

SOURCE: The Miami Herald, December 11 and 18, 1983.